

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 3336

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SU, US

SUBJECT: URGENT REQUEST FOR C-130 CREWS

1. SUDAN MINDEF APPROACHED ME AT EGYPTIAN NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION LAST NIGHT WITH AN URGENT REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE. HE SAID THERE WAS A "FAMINE" IN THE SOUTH. HE HAD SENT TWO C-130 PLANELOADS OF FLOUR FOR THE SUDANESE MILITARY IN JUBA BUT THERE WAS EVEN GREATER NEED TO ASSIST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN THE AREAS OF JUBA, WAU AND MALAKAL. HE COMPLAINED THAT THE CIVILIAN MINISTERS WHO SHOULD HAVE SEEN TO IT THAT FOOD SUPPLIES WERE SENT SOUTH IN A TIMELY MANNER HAVE BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH OAU SUMMIT AND OTHER MATTERS AND HAD FALLEN DOWN ON THE JOB. MOREOVER, SUDAN'S RIVER TRANSPORT SYSTEM HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO DETERIORATE TO POINT WHERE IT WAS PRACTICALLY USELESS. ALL OF THIS HAD SERVED TO GENERATE PRESSURE ON SUDANESE MILITARY TO HELP RESOLVE THE SITUATION.

2. HIS SPECIFIC REQUEST WAS THAT SHIPMENT OF ESSENTIAL RADAR PARTS BE EXPEDITED SO THAT THREE OF THE C-130'S, NOW DEADLINED, COULD BE RETURNED TO SERVICE. BUT HIS MOST URGENT REQUEST WAS THAT LOCKHEED SUPPLY TWO
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COMPLETE CREWS (CONSISTING OF 2 PILOTS, 2 NAVIGATORS, 2 FLIGHT ENGINEERS, AND 2 LOADMASTERS FOR A TOTAL OF 10 PERSONNEL) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO FLY AIRCRAFT.

3. DEFENSE ATTACHE HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE SUDANESE MILITARY MOST OF THE MORNING. HE REPORTS THAT THE SUDANESE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SHIP DEFECTIVE

RADARS TO CONUS FOR REPAIR DUE TO A BAN ON CARGO SHIPMENTS AT KHARTOUM AIRPORT DURING PERIOD OF THE SUMMIT. FURTHER, IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT A LONG LEAD TIME FOR REPAIR IS NECESSARY FOR THE NAVIGATIONAL RADAR AND THE MOST PRACTICAL INTERIM SOLUTION WOULD BE FOR LOCKHEED TO ALLOW THEIR IN-COUNTRY PERSONNEL TO WORK ON RADARS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT WARRANTIES WOULD NOT BE VIOLATED. FURTHERMORE, MINDEF HAS WITHDRAWN THE WORD "FAMINE" FROM HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION. HE SAYS THIS IS A PERIODIC PROBLEM OF GETTING FOOD SUPPLIES TO THE REMOTE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY DURING THE RAINY SEASON. COMMENT: DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE VISITED THE SOUTH RECENTLY HAVE OBSERVED SERIOUS DISTRESS ON THE PART OF THE POPULATION BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF FOOD SUPPLIES. FOR POLITICAL REASONS OBVIOUSLY SUDANESE HESITATE TO USE THE WORD "FAMINE". YET THE NEED IS THERE AND I URGE THAT WE DO OUR BEST TO RESPOND TO IT. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THERE ARE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FOOD IN THE COUNTRY. THE PROBLEM IS GETTING IT TO THE PEOPLE WHO NEED IT.

4. THE QUESTION OF ADDITIONAL U.S. CREWS FOR C-130'S HAS BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN PEACE PILLAR MISSION AND SUDAN MILITARY OVER THE PAST MONTHS. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, PEACE PILLAR REPRESENTATIVES FEEL THAT SUDANESE HAVE REACHED POINT WHERE THEY ARE CAPABLE OF FLYING THESE AIRCRAFT ON THEIR OWN. MOREOVER, THE FUNDS ALLOCATED
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FOR AMERICAN CREWS IN THE PEACE PILLAR CONTRACT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED. SUDANESE ON THEIR PART ARE STILL HESITANT TO USE THEIR OWN PERSONNEL IN THESE EXPENSIVE AIRCRAFT ON THESE DIFFICULT MISSIONS.

5. RECOMMENDATION: IN VIEW OF THE URGENT NEED TO GET FOOD TO THE SUDANESE, I RECOMMEND THAT STATE AND DEFENSE CUT THE RED TAPE AND RECRUIT AND SENT TO SUDAN TWO COMPLETE CREWS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. SUDANESE MILITARY TELL US THAT IF PEACE PILLAR FUNDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, THEY ARE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO A SEPARATE CONTRACT AND PAY THE CREWS THEMSELVES. IN VIEW OF SUDAN'S EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FINANCIAL SITUATION, I WOULD HOPE THAT A WAY COULD BE FOUND TO AVOID THIS. IF PEACE PILLAR FUNDS ARE, IN FACT, NOT AVAILABLE, PERHAPS WE COULD FUND THE CREWS THROUGH THE PRESENT PERIOD OF HARDSHIP (ABOUT 60 DAYS) OUT OF U.S. DISASTER RELIEF FUNDS.
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